

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP: ECUMENICAL GLUE

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Contemporary Christian Worship (CCW) music has become a multimillion dollar industry. *Worship Leader* magazine has a distribution of 50,000. The publisher, John Styll, made the following telling observation:

“You can have a pretty straight-laced but theologically liberal Presbyterian church using the same songs that are being sung at a wild and crazy charismatic church, but they use different arrangements and adapt the songs to their unique settings” (Styll, quoted by Steve Rabey, “The Profits of Praise,” *Christianity Today*, July 12, 1999).

Why would a “theologically liberal” Presbyterian church, which hates the old hymns about the blood and which adds hymns about mother god and the social gospel to its songbook and which thinks unrepentant homosexuals make fine church members, be attracted to contemporary praise music? Why would a Roman Catholic who worships Mary and who praises God for purgatory (such as the popular charismatic priest Tom Forrest) be attracted to contemporary praise music?

Don’t you see something wrong with this picture, my friends?

The reason the charismatic praise music is so hugely and universally popular in a wicked hour is three-fold:

FIRST, AS A RULE IT IS NOT DOCTRINALLY STRONG AND CLEAR. While there are exceptions, they are only that. CCW sings of Jesus and grace and love and salvation, but in such a doctrinally non-specific manner that the modernists can find their “jesus” and the Catholics their “grace” therein. You see, heretics use the same terms that Bible believers use, only they have a different dictionary. So, they sing about grace but they do not necessarily mean the free undeserved grace that came through the shedding of Christ’s blood; and they sing of Jesus, but it is not necessarily the thrice holy Jesus, the mighty God, the everlasting father, of Scripture. It might be the grace that comes through sacraments or the Jesus of the Catholic host.

SECOND, THE CHARISMATIC PRAISE MUSIC IS POPULAR EVEN AMONG UNREGENERATE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE BECAUSE IT IS THE SAME ROCK MUSIC TO WHICH THIS GENERATION IS IRREDEEMABLY ADDICTED. And there are all sorts of rock music, hard, soft, rap, you name it. People are so addicted to rock music today that they often do not recognize that music is rock unless it is of the

most violent brand. I personally believe that if you took away the rock music, you would see an immediate and dramatic decline in the popularity of contemporary praise. Rock music is very powerful and moving in and of itself, and I am convinced that it plays a large role in producing the emotional high that modern worshippers are commonly seeking. Where would they be without their rock music?

THIRD, THE CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSIC IS EVOLVING FROM AN ECUMENICAL PHILOSOPHY OF POSITIVISM AND SPIRITUAL NEUTRALISM. One thing that is grossly and almost universally lacking from the lives and ministries of the creators of contemporary praise music is a forthright defense of the faith and exposure of apostasy. That is not an optional part of Christianity. To neglect this ministry is blatant disobedience to the Bible that commands us to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). For the most part, these are the people who believe in the myth of “evangelical Catholics” and who praise Mother Teresa as a great Christian saint. These are the people who refuse to name the names of heretics and who fuss at those who do. Many of the creators of contemporary praise music are not themselves heretics and false teachers, but they have taken up the neutral ground that allows the false teachers to prosper.

The Bible describes massive apostasy at the end of the church age (i.e., 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 4:2-4), and contemporary praise music is proving to be one of the most powerful glues to bring together every sort of church in this strange and wicked hour, regardless of heresies. For reporting purposes, I have attended meetings of a wide range of denominations, Charismatic, liberal Baptist, Southern Baptist, Willowcreek, mainline Lutheran and Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and the one thing they all have in common today is the music.

We are witnessing the greatest ecumenical movement in history, a blending, a merging, a coming together, a gross downplaying of doctrine, and it is being accomplished by the most blatant and open disobedience to the Word of God. God COMMANDS separation from heresy (Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10-11; Heb. 13:13; 2 John 8-11).

Beware of end-time apostasy and of the music that is melding it together. If we can't worship without rock music, we have a serious problem.

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